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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 31, 1985

Dear Mr. Speaker:

The FY 1985 Defense Authorization Act requests that the President provide a report to Congress by June 1, 1985 that describes the Administration's position concerning its future policy of interim restraint, a policy of not undercutting existing strategic arms agreements so long as the Soviet Union exercises equal restraint. Specifically, the report is to describe the implications of the USS ALASKA's sea trials for the no-undercut policy, assess potential Soviet responses to the US no-undercut policy decisions, make recommendations regarding future US policy, and review Soviet activities with respect to existing strategic arms agreements.

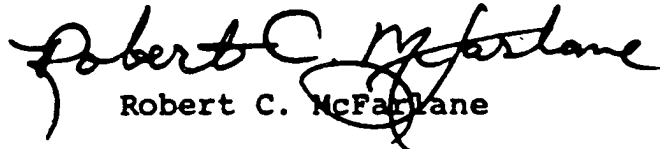
An issue of this complexity and importance has required our most comprehensive analysis and careful consideration, and this work has been underway for many months. I am sure you understand that our judgments on this matter must take into account a number of important factors, including the pattern of Soviet noncompliance with existing arms control agreements as reported to the Congress, the scale of the past and projected Soviet strategic buildup, the requirements for assuring effective U.S. deterrent forces in the face of the Soviet buildup, force projections for a SALT and non-SALT regime, and the activity and pace of the Geneva negotiations, where we are seeking agreement on deep reductions to equal and more stabilizing levels of nuclear arms.

The import of this issue argues strongly against haste and for a most thorough and serious consideration of this matter. We have given just such an effort to the matter of interim restraint and have worked diligently to complete our analysis in time to provide a formal report to Congress by June 1, 1985.

As of this date, we are completing our assessment of the military and diplomatic implications and options. This issue will be discussed by the President and his key advisors at a formal National Security Council meeting at the beginning of next week, after which time we will also consult with our Allies. The Secretary of State will conduct these consultations at a meeting of the North Atlantic Council (NAC) to be held in Lisbon next week. It is the President's intention to provide a report to the Congress by June 10.

While the timing of the NAC meeting forecloses adherence to the June 1 date, I believe that the President's report to the Congress, to be submitted by June 10, will provide the basis for a true bipartisan consensus on this critical national security issue.

Sincerely,


Robert C. McFarlane

The Honorable Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr.
Speaker of the House of Representatives
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

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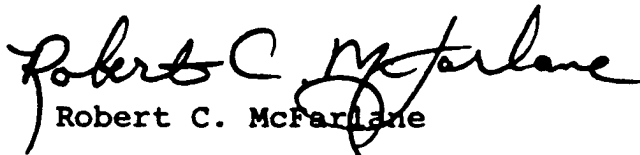
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Robert C. McFarlane

The Honorable George Bush
President of the Senate
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

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A26 FRIDAY, MAY 31, 1985

THE WASHINGTON POST

Reagan Delays Decision On Abiding by SALT II

President Wants More Time With Advisers

By Don Oberdorfer
Washington Post Staff Writer

President Reagan, amid intense administration infighting, has decided to delay at least until next week a decision on whether to abandon the limits of the unratified SALT II nuclear arms treaty, White House officials said yesterday.

The officials said a letter from Reagan is being sent to Capitol Hill saying he is unable to report by Saturday on whether to continue the "no undercut" policy regarding the SALT II limits that was in effect during his first four years in office. Such a report was due by June 1 under the terms of the 1985 Defense Authorization Act.

A White House official said Reagan wants time to meet with the National Security Council on the issue Monday and to consult with U.S. allies before reporting to Congress on the knotty issue. The new target date for the report to Congress is Friday, June 7, although officials conceded that any definite presidential decision early next week could leak out quickly.

Secretary of State George P. Shultz is scheduled to meet NATO foreign ministers in Lisbon next Wednesday and Thursday. An official said the SALT II policy is likely to come up then, although perhaps by that time Shultz may inform allies of Reagan's decision rather than ask their views.

Some NATO allies have been led to expect consultations on the issue

by the United States before next week's NATO meeting, diplomatic sources said. Most of them prefer that SALT II limits be retained lest their abandonment touch off an uncontrolled arms race that will raise political as well as military tensions.

"The feuding and fighting in the administration on this issue is intolerable," said a congressional source familiar with the maneuvering in the executive branch. This source said word reaching Capitol Hill is that Shultz, National Security Affairs Adviser Robert C. McFarlane, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. John W. Vessey Jr. and arms adviser Paul H. Nitze are against abandoning the SALT II limits, while Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger and some of his aides are for jettisoning the "no undercut" policy.

The Senate may debate the issue Tuesday when arms control amendments are to be in order to the 1986 Defense Authorization Bill. An aide said conservative senators, including Sens. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), Steve Symms (R-Idaho) and Malcolm Wallop (R-Wyo.), will mount a filibuster about Soviet arms control violations if Senate liberals seek to arrange a vote backing continued compliance with SALT II before Reagan submits his report.

Arms adviser Edward L. Rowny, in a breakfast meeting with reporters, said "reams of paper" and "lots of meetings" within the administration have been devoted to the SALT II compliance question. As of



GEORGE P. SHULTZ

... to meet NATO officials next week

yesterday morning, Rowny said, the administration is "very much in the throes" of discussion in an attempt to narrow the options for Reagan.

Weighing in publicly against abandoning SALT II limits was Rep. Les Aspin (D-Wis.), chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, who said yesterday that such an action "would run counter to our proclaimed goals and strategy" in the Geneva arms talks. In a speech to the Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies, Aspin said, "The message we send if we let SALT lapse is that we intend to mount a buildup of offensive arms. There would be no other reason to let the agreements lapse."

Abandoning SALT II limits might make Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative plan, popularly known as "Star Wars," "utterly impractical," said Aspin, because the space-based defense would have to counter "a new order of threat" if the Soviet Union can freely expand its nuclear striking power with no restraints imposed by treaty limits.

Reagan May Extend '79 Arms Treaty

By LESLIE H. GELB

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 30 — Reagan Administration officials say they expect President Reagan to continue honoring for now the broad provisions of the 1979 strategic arms limitation treaty, but reluctantly and with qualifications.

The treaty, which expires at the end of 1985, has not been ratified by either the United States or the Soviet Union, although both sides have said that they would generally abide by it.

The prevailing view among officials is that Mr. Reagan will either postpone a decision until the fall or modify the terms of adherence to avoid further dismantling of American nuclear forces as required by treaty limits.

The officials conclude that Mr. Reagan would not want to run the risks of outright renunciation, which they say would be: a new battle with Congress on top of struggles over the budget, the tax system and Central America; a negative reaction in the United States and in Western Europe, and a decline in Soviet-American relations.

Exact Terms Still in Doubt

However, the exact terms of compliance are still in doubt after a meeting Tuesday of arms control advisers at the White House. They were said to have reflected the divisions among the senior Cabinet officers.

All of the President's senior aides are said to be against unqualified adherence in the face of what they see as Soviet treaty violations. But Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger and William J. Casey, Director of Central Intelligence, want outright renunciation, while Secretary of State George P. Shultz; Paul H. Nitze, his arms control adviser; Robert C. McFarlane, the President's national security adviser, and some of the Joint Chiefs of Staff favor either delaying a decision or modified adherence.

"If the McFarlane-Shultz view prevails," a senior official said, "it will be with a fudge factor, some kind of formula that will allow the President to distance himself from outright adherence, but not so much that the Soviets will bolt from the treaty themselves."

Another key official said: "Those who want to get rid of the treaty are pushing for a hard decision now which they believe cannot be for continued American compliance as long as the President says the Soviets are cheating."

The White House spokesman, Larry Speakes, announced Wednesday that Secretary of State Shultz will travel to Lisbon next week to attend a meeting of the foreign ministers of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, where the 1979 treaty is to be discussed. The allies are known to be against renunciation, and Mr. Shultz is expected to assure them in that regard.

With the treaty expiring Dec. 31, Mr. Reagan is required to report to Congress on his plans by next Saturday,

June 1. Mr. Speakes said the President would miss the deadline and might simply send Congress on Tuesday a list of choices, not a decision.

The significance of Mr. Reagan's decision was heightened by the resumption today of the Soviet-American arms talks in Geneva, and a statement this week by Mikhail S. Gorbachev, the Soviet leader, that the first round had been fruitless.

The main arguments of the McFarlane-Shultz group for continued compliance with the 1979 treaty are that renunciation would almost certainly kill any chance of a Reagan-Gorbachev meeting this year and that, if all treaty restraints were to end, the Soviet Union would be in a better position to expand its forces than the United States.

They supporters of this view point to intelligence estimates that the Russians could increase the number of missile warheads by several thousand in two or three years because many missiles are large enough to accommodate more warheads and several production lines are now open.

Argument for Renunciation

The Weinberger-Casey group counters that renunciation is the only way to show that the United States is serious about compliance and that it would jolt Moscow into serious negotiations in Geneva. The supporters of this view concede the Soviet Union's potential to move ahead in warheads, but contend that it will not expand, on the ground that it already has enough warheads.

Both sides have about 8,000 ballistic missile warheads.

Before taking office in 1981, Mr. Reagan characterized the 1979 treaty, the second major arms control pact of the 1970's, as "fatally flawed." In office, he decided that some limits were better than none and he agreed with Soviet leaders to abide by the treaty terms.

In practice, this meant that Moscow would not increase its strategic missile and bomber forces beyond 1981 levels of about 2,500, and Washington would not exceed its 1981 total of about 2,200. As long as the Americans refused to ratify the treaty, the Russians declined to reduce to the treaty ceiling of 2,250.

To stay at 1981 levels, both sides destroyed older missiles as new ones became operational. For example, the Americans scrapped Polaris submarines as it deployed new Trident craft.

More important to strategic planners, both sides acted to stay within the limit of 1,200 missiles with multiple warheads. The Soviet Union is not expected to exceed that limit for a year or so. But the United States will exceed it by 14 missiles this fall, when the latest Trident, the Alaska with 24 missiles, begins sea trials. The United States can observe the limit by destroying either 14 Minutemen missiles or a Poseidon submarine with 16 missiles.

In view of pressure for treaty renunciation, the Administration decided to link continued adherence to the course of the Geneva negotiations and to Soviet willingness to comply with exist-

ing treaty commitments.

There is no disagreement in the Administration that the Soviet Union's placement of an early-warning radar at Abalakovo in central Siberia is a violation of the first arms-control treaty of 1972, which limited antiballistic missile systems. Under that treaty, such radars can be located only on the periphery, not inland. The Russians contend that the Abalakovo radar is used for tracking space vehicles and thus can be put anywhere. The 1972 treaty was ratified and is in force.

Coded Signals Are an Issue

American officials also do not disagree much that the Soviet Union has been encoding radio signals of its missile tests beyond what is permitted by the 1979 treaty.

Some Government analysts also contend that the Soviet Union has been exceeding a treaty prohibition against more than one new type of land-based missile. Moscow has said that the SSX-24 is its new missile. Washington says that another missile, the SSX-25, is also a new type, but Moscow denies this, as do some Administration analysts.

Even more contentious within the Administration is the charge that Moscow has deployed the SS-16 land-based missile despite an explicit treaty ban. There seems to be no disputing that some of these missiles are at a Soviet test range, but no hard evidence that they have been deployed.

Meanwhile, most members of the Joint Chiefs are said to be concerned that renunciation of the 1979 treaty would play havoc with military planning. In the absence of treaty observance, the military fears, Moscow could increase its forces and take concealment measures to prevent Washington from knowing what was going on. Concealment is prohibited by the treaty.

Conservatives threatening to stall vote on defense bill

By Bill Gertz
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Senate conservatives have threatened to filibuster the Defense Department authorization bill until President Reagan reaches a decision on continuing U.S. compliance with the unratified SALT II treaty, according to congressional sources.

President Reagan was expected to inform Congress that he would be unable to meet the June 1 deadline for deciding whether to continue complying with the terms of the strategic arms limitations pact. The sources said he would seek a delay until June 7 to further consider options.

A number of conservative senators, lead by Malcolm Wallop, R-Wyo., threatened last week to stall debate on the defense bill until the president made his decision on continued U.S. compliance. Other senators supporting the idea of a filibuster are Sens. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., and Steve Symms, R-Idaho.

Now that it appears the president will delay his decision until June 7, the senators plan to hold off further debate by presenting government documentation on Soviet arms-control breaches as a protest to the administration delay.

The aim of extended discussion on Soviet SALT II compliance is to forestall a proposed amendment to the defense bill that would commit the administration to abiding by the SALT treaty through next year.

Sen. Symms and Sen. Ernest Hollings, D-S.C., plan to introduce an amendment to the defense bill that would prevent the Pentagon from spending any of its funds on dismantling U.S. weapons systems to SALT II levels until the president certifies that the Soviet Union is found to be "in full compliance with SALT II."

Senior national security officials in the administration have agreed

that the United States should respond to reported Soviet arms-control violations with several options that would violate some provisions of the SALT II treaty, administration sources said. The options for the president's decision will be discussed among senior advisers at a meeting today.

Secret CIA reports on Soviet SALT II compliance reveal that the Soviets have violated two key provisions of the 1979 treaty. The CIA found that the number of Soviet nuclear weapons launchers — strategic nuclear delivery vehicles (SNDV) in arms-control parlance — exceeds the SALT II ceiling of 2,405 land-, submarine- and air-launched missiles.

The CIA also found that the Soviets have violated the ceiling on the number of multiple warhead launchers — also called MIRVs for multiple independently-targetable re-entry vehicles — permitted under SALT II. CIA estimates indicate the Soviets have exceeded the treaty limit of 820 MIRV launchers.

With the addition of 18 new land-based missiles designated SSX-25 with MIRVed warheads, the estimated total of Soviet MIRV missiles is 836, which is 16 more than allowed under SALT.

Under the provisions of SALT II, the Soviet Union had agreed to reduce its SNDV total from 2,504 in two stages to 2,400 first and finally 2,250. The reduction was regarded as a major Soviet concession at the SALT II talks.

Regarding the Soviet failure to comply with other arms treaties, the secret CIA study found that Soviet violations of the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty of 1972 "could have significant effects" on the U.S. capability to retaliate against Soviet targets.

The report says the Soviet Union has "probably" violated the ABM treaty by using surface-to-air mis-

siles in an ABM mode. The Soviet SAX-12 surface-to-air missile system is described as a probable ABM treaty violation since it can be used as an anti-ballistic missile.

The report also reveals that the Soviets "have developed rapidly deployable/transportable ABM components" and have "violated radar limitation with construction of the Krasnoyarsk radar." The Krasnoyarsk radar has been identified as a very large "phased-array" system for tracking targets on the horizon.

"All this suggests that the Soviets may be preparing an ABM defense of its national territory," the report states. "Such a defense could have significant effects on our ability to retaliate against Soviet targets."

An unclassified administration study of the U.S. and Soviet capabilities to break out of the SALT limits shows that the Soviets are already ahead of the United States in new weapons deployment:

- The United States is building two new bomber types to the Soviets' three.

- The United States has one new nuclear submarine in production, the Trident, to the Soviet's Typhoon and Delta 4 class nuclear submarines.

- The United States has the MX and Midgetman ICBMs planned, while the Soviets have four new ICBMs — SSX-24, SSX-25, SSX-26, and SSX-27.

- The United States has no ABM production line, while the Soviets have one.

- U.S. warheads can be multiplied only marginally, while Soviet warhead multiplication has been found to double with 14 warheads on one SS-18.

- The MX has no basing option except existing fixed silos; the Soviet SSX-24 and SSX-25 can be deployed in fixed silos or in a mobile mode.

Advisers pressuring president to forget about SALT

By Bill Gertz
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

5/30

Senior U.S. advisers are recommending that President Reagan pursue strategic weapons programs without regard to compliance with the unratified SALT II treaty limitations, administration sources said yesterday.

President Reagan will decide by the beginning of next week whether

the United States will comply with nuclear weapons limits set by the treaty, the sources said.

All the options presently being formulated by middle-level officials for a decision by the president and his Cabinet-level advisers call for some degree of SALT II violations, according to the sources. They caution, however, that the debate is continuing and the final decision rests with the president himself.

The debate, which Capitol Hill conservatives regard as a "fight for the heart and soul" of the Reagan administration, is expected to reach its peak Tuesday when the presidential decision is made public.

White House spokesman Larry Speakes said yesterday that the president "is in the process of reviewing" U.S. options regarding

SALT

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SALT II compliance.

He said no decision has been made because the administration has been busy preparing for the second round of U.S.-Soviet arms control talks, which starts today in Geneva.

Under the terms of an amendment to the fiscal 1985 Defense Authorization bill, the president has until June 1 to report to Congress on U.S. policy toward SALT II compliance.

But Mr. Speakes said the report to Congress might not include Mr. Reagan's decision on the issue.

"Whether or not he tells them [Congress] what we're going to do when SALT II expires and whether he tells them he is reviewing a number of options and outlines those options remains to be seen," Mr. Speakes said.

The options under consideration lead the United States to violate the SALT agreement in response to Soviet violations, government sources said.

"Everyone agrees that we can't be in a position of not responding to Soviet violations," said one official familiar with the arms control issue.

However, the sources cautioned that these options have been presented by "middle-level" officials, and none of the "principals" who will participate in a White House National Security Council meeting next week have yet weighed in with their recommendations.

Secretary of State George Shultz and Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger were among those principals who have not yet given their views to President Reagan for his decision. The Joint Chiefs of Staff also have not presented their position, an official said.

One official said that almost all of the options being discussed "one way or the other would involve technical violations" of the SALT II agreement.

The amendment requires the president to report on four SALT-related topics. He must notify Congress of the effect of the U.S. Alaska sea trials on current "no undercut" policy on strategic arms.

The administration will face its first challenge to the SALT II limits this August when the U.S. Alaska begins sea trials. By launching the Alaska, the U.S. will go over the 1,200 threshold for submarine-launched ballistic missiles set by SALT II.

The president's report also must assess the Soviet political, military and negotiating responses to a decision to abandon the SALT II restraints and must review Soviet activities with respect to arms control agreements.

Finally, the report must "make recommendations regarding the future of U.S. strategic offensive arms agreement."

Administration sources said senior arms control advisers are scheduled to meet this Friday to discuss the decision on SALT.

The senior advisers, Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Perle, Assistant Secretary of State Richard Burt, State Department Politico-Military Affairs Director John Chain, National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane and Chief Arms Control Adviser Paul Nitze, will pre-

pare policy recommendations for the National Security Council.

The final decision on whether the U.S. will comply with the restraints of the 1979 unratified treaty is expected following a National Security Council meeting on Monday.

On Capitol Hill, treaty compliance proponents and opponents have prepared amendments on the SALT issue intended for this year's Defense Department authorization bill.

Proponents, led by Sens. Patrick

the SALT provisions, which they hope to tack on to the Defense bill.

SALT critics have prepared a counter-amendment that would prohibit the Pentagon from using any funds to dismantle weapons systems in order to comply with the SALT treaty.

That amendment, co-sponsored by Steve Symms, R-Idaho, and Ernest Hollings, D-S.C., is expected to be the subject of heated Senate debate when it is brought before Congress late next week.

In a "Dear Colleague" letter sent out last week the two senators urged Congress to "save the Poseidons." Under a SALT compliance decision, one U.S. option would be to deactivate 10 Poseidon nuclear missile submarines that would diminish the number of U.S. strategic warheads by 1,600.

A recent classified CIA study of SALT compliance found that dismantling the Poseidons would give the Soviet Union a significant lead in the number of nuclear warheads in its arsenal, a key indicator of strategic nuclear strength and an essential element of balance in the deterrent strategy.

Sen. Hollings' support for the amendment is regarded as a key indicator of bi-partisan support for abandoning the SALT II limits. He also voted against the SALT I treaty in 1972.

Sen. Hollings told the Senate last week that SALT was never ratified because "it was not in the security interests of the United States."

"Simply stated, we have a treaty violator on our hands," Mr. Hollings said of Soviet SALT violations, 11 of which have been documented by the administration. "It is not a close call; it is a categorical call made by a bipartisan group," he said referring to the Presidential General Advisory Committee on Arms Control report on Soviet violations.

"If the president agrees to continue abiding by SALT II, conservatives in the Senate will accuse the administration of appeasing the Soviets, in the same way Scoop Jackson accused the Carter administration of appeasement in 1979," one Senate aide said. The late Senator Henry M. Jackson was a key Democratic opponent of SALT II who helped defeat Carter administration efforts to have the Senate ratify the treaty.

"The fight [over SALT II compliance] is a battle for the heart and soul of the second Reagan term," the aide said.

SALT critics point to President Reagan's statements opposing the treaty. Last May 10 in Europe, the president called the agreement "rather one-sided" and said as a result "there's no need for us to continue" the treaty.

The Washington Times

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SALT gives Soviets an edge, CIA says

By Bill Gertz
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The Soviet Union will hold a significant nuclear warhead advantage over the United States in the next five years if President Reagan complies with terms of the unratified SALT II treaty and dismantles several U.S. missile systems, according to secret CIA reports.

The CIA estimates, along with other classified government documents obtained by The Washington Times, challenge a fundamental element of the United States' three-pronged nuclear deterrent strategy composed of missiles, submarines and bombers.

U.S. compliance with the SALT II limitations, if combined with Soviet ABM violations, would undermine this country's ability to penetrate Soviet defenses by way of close-range nuclear submarines, the documents conclude.

Both the United States and the Soviet Union have said they will observe the provisions of the treaty after it expires at the end of this year. The treaty was never ratified by the Senate. However, under an amendment to last year's Defense Department authorization bill, President Reagan has until this Saturday to report to Congress on whether or not the administration will continue to abide by the limits of the 1979 SALT II treaty.

The formulas limiting the numbers of weapons in the SALT treaty, while complex, were laboriously negotiated to serve as the key elements moderating the superpower arms race.

If the president agrees to follow the SALT II provisions, the United States has two choices. Both involve a combination of Poseidon submarines and Minuteman missiles. The choices would involve dismantling a maximum of three Poseidon-class nuclear missile submarines or retiring up to 50 Minuteman III missiles within the next year. The total number of warheads that would be deactivated would be about 630.

The Soviets, to comply with SALT II over the next year, would only have to deactivate

Yankee-class submarines, two Hotel-class submarines and 45 SS-11 missiles.

During the period between 1985 and 1991, the CIA estimates, the United States, under the two options available to it, would deactivate 1,500 to 2,500 warheads, compared to only 500 warheads removed from the Soviet missile arsenal.

Related studies indicate that by 1988 the United States under SALT II restraints would have eliminated a total of about 1,200 multiple warhead weapons to a Soviet cutback of only 153 multiple warheads.

Only after 1990 will Soviet constraints under SALT significantly differ from non-SALT deployments, according to these documents.

One estimate shows the CIA believes that in 1990 the Soviets would have 11,500 to 12,500 nuclear missile warheads without abiding by SALT constraints and 10,500 to 11,500 warheads if SALT II levels are observed.

In contrast, U.S. missile warheads would total about 8,500 under a SALT II breakout program involving the deployment of the MX and Midgetman intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM).

Assuming U.S. compliance with the SALT II restrictions and an administration decision to deactivate 10 Poseidon submarines, the United States would reduce its warheads to a number less than the current number of warheads in its entire missile arsenal despite current and planned strategic modernization programs.

Of the two SALT compliance options, administration sources said dismantling the Poseidon submarines is preferred because the Navy does not want to rebuild the nuclear reactors of the 10 Poseidon submarines slated for deactivation.

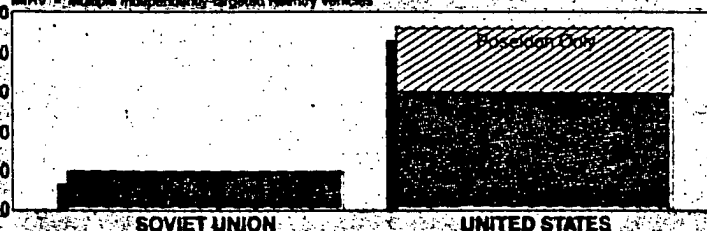
Sources said the cost of rebuilding the Poseidon reactor would be \$2 billion—the same as the cost of one Trident-class submarine that will replace the Poseidons as they are taken out of service.

Removal of the Poseidons, which have a capability of carrying 160 warheads, would diminish the number of U.S. warheads by 1,600 after all the submarines were deactivated.

The first of the Trident submarines, the USS Alaska, is scheduled for its sea trials in August. When fully in commission, the submarine's armament would put the United States in excess of the SALT limits by 14 missiles. One Trident carries 192 warheads.

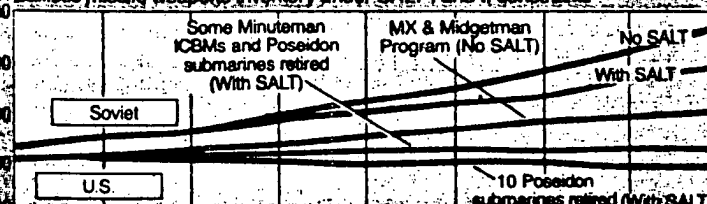
U.S. WARHEAD DISADVANTAGE UNDER SALT II

MIRVed warheads required to be dismantled for SALT I and II (1985 to 1991)



COMPARISON OF U.S. AND SOVIET MISSILE DEPLOYMENTS

Ballistic missile weapons inventory under SALT I and II constraints



President Expected To Defer Decision On SALT II Limits

Congress Must Be Notified by Saturday

By David Hoffman
Washington Post Staff Writer

President Reagan is expected to inform Congress soon that he has postponed until later this year a decision on whether the United States will exceed limits on nuclear missiles in the unratified SALT II treaty, administration officials said yesterday.

Reagan is required by law to submit a report to Congress by Saturday on plans for complying with the treaty. One official said the report will discuss options but not include a decision by Reagan on whether the United States intends to exceed the treaty limits on missiles.

A second official said Reagan is still considering what to put in the report to Congress. This official said the report will probably be delayed beyond the June 1 deadline, in part to allow time for a National Security Council meeting on the decision.

Administration officials have been sharply divided about whether the United States should exceed the SALT II limits. White House spokesman Larry Speakes said yesterday that Reagan "has a number of options before him, and he may simply state to the Congress that these are the options that are now before us, and that we may not arrive at these decisions . . . until the fall."

The limits in SALT II, never ratified by the Senate, are to lapse at the end of the year. The superpowers have pledged since 1981 to continue respecting the treaty's main provisions.

Reagan must decide whether to exceed the limits this fall when the USS Alaska, a Trident submarine, begins sea trials, putting the United

States above the SALT II limit for multi-warhead intercontinental ballistic missiles.

Administration officials said one reason for postponing a decision on the limits would be to allow time to see whether the Soviets shift from their hard-line positions at the second round of Geneva arms talks that begin this week.

Officials also said Reagan has decided to send Vice President Bush to reassure Western European leaders about Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative, a proposed high-technology shield against incoming Soviet missiles.

In contrast to his high-profile effort to bolster Western European support for deployment of intermediate-range weapons in 1982, Bush is expected to consult privately with leaders in Britain, France, West Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium on this trip, officials said.

Reagan gave final instructions yesterday for the Geneva talks to chief negotiator Max M. Kampelman, and the White House accused the Soviets of "backtracking" on previous positions in the negotiations.

Taking note of a statement by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev that the first round of talks had been "fruitless," Speakes said, "Unfortunately, we find ourselves in agreement with this characterization, owing to Soviet backtracking"

"We find the Soviet comments are an intriguing tactic for turning recalcitrance into a virtue," he added.

Officials said later that Speakes was referring to Soviet retreats from positions in strategic arms

reduction talks during Reagan's first term.

"The U.S. returns to the negotiations with hope," Speakes said, "if the Soviets are able to turn from their internal accounts to take advantage of the opportunity for progress." White House officials have said they think that Gorbachev is preoccupied with internal problems and not prepared to discuss a possible meeting with Reagan.

One official said some administration officials think that Gorbachev is seeking U.S. concessions in Geneva before deciding whether to meet with Reagan.

Speakes said the U.S. positions in Geneva have not changed and that the administration "will not reward the Soviets for backtracking" on earlier positions.